Transportation Consultancy

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Northfleet Harbourside

Summary Proof of Evidence

Client: Northfleet Central 1 Ltd
Project: Northfleet Harbourside
Date: April 2025

1. Introduction

1.1.1 I am instructed by Northfleet Central 1 Ltd (the "Applicant") to provide expert witness advice on transport planning matters in respect of the Call in Inquiry (the "Inquiry") relating to the proposed development known as Northfleet Harbourside (the "Proposed Development").

1.2 Qualifications and Experience

1.2.1 My name is Rory Spiller and I am a Regional Director at The Transportation Consultancy Ltd. ('ttc'), a privately owned consulting practice specialising in the provision of transport planning services to private and public sector clients in the development planning sector.

1.2.2 I hold a Bachelor of Science, with Honours (BSc Hons), in Transport Management and Planning which was obtained at Loughborough University. I have 18 years of experience working in the field of transport planning.

1.3 Scope of Evidence

1.3.1 This summary Proof of Evidence (PoE) focusses on and responds to:

- Changes in planning policy that have arisen since the application was submitted at both a National and Regional scale;
- Changes to local transport conditions that have arisen since the application was submitted including:
  - Closure of the A226 Galley Hill Road;
  - Delivery of Fastrack Bus Services;
  - Lower Thames Crossing; and
- Statements made by Britania Refined Metals Limited (BRM) in their Statement of Case;

2. Conclusions

2.1 Transport Policy

2.1.1 The Proposed Development assessments submitted as part of the Application meet the transport tests set by both the previous and current National Planning Policy Framework, with no assessment scenario/s forecasting unacceptable impacts on highway safety or severe impacts on the road network attributable to the Proposed Development.

2.1.2 The Proposed Development also continues to meet the ambition of Kent's Local Transport Plan 5 – Striking the Balance, and is fully supportive of the sustainable travel principles and provides strategic footways and cycleways alongside the proposed highway links throughout the site. These routes provide connectivity to strategic locations including Ebbsfleet International rail station, Northfleet rail station and the Public Right of Way (PROW) network which traverses the site.

2.2 Local Transport Conditions

Galley Hill Road

2.2.1 The A226 Galley Hill Road collapsed in April 2024 and is currently closed for all traffic. Should the A226 Galley Hill Road not reopen then then it is considered likely that traffic associated with the Proposed Development would route south and use the A2 corridor for journeys to the west.

2.2.2 It is therefore anticipated that if existing local traffic and development traffic rerouted in this direction then some mitigation works would be required on the highway network. This is true of both a without and with development scenario if the A226 Galley Hill Road remains closed.

Public Rights of Way

2.2.3 In consideration of the local PROW, KCC have no in principle concerns with regard to the PROW network and the Proposed Development is acceptable on the basis that an appropriate planning condition can be agreed in the event that a need for mitigation is identified.

Fastrack Bus Services

2.2.4 Due to the phasing of the Proposed Development, it is apparent that the final highway infrastructure will not be in place prior to first occupation of the site. As this infrastructure was a key driver in delivering a sustainable development a consultation exercise was undertaken with Kent County Council and the Fastrack operations team to develop a number of potential alternative scenarios which would ensure a high quality, high frequency bus service is in place for first occupation of the site, including consideration of the on-going closure of Galley Hill Road.

2.2.5 From the work completed It is evident that the Proposed Development can deliver a suitable bus service to serve first occupation, regardless of whether Galley Hill Road is reopened by that time, and this will be secured by way of the section 106 Agreement to ensure its provision.

Thames Clipper

2.2.6 The Applicant has been in discussion with Thames Clipper regarding a potential future service from the Proposed Development. Thames Clipper advised that based on the quantum of the Proposed Development and the location of Robin's Wharf, a stop could be viable subject to passenger demand. A figure of 50,000 passengers per year was cited as the threshold for this. Discussions remain on-going in this regard, with the Applicant awaiting a proposal from Thames Clipper.

Lower Thames Crossing

2.2.7 The current forecasts for delivery of the now approved Lower Thames Crossing are for an opening date post 2030 which confirms that the modelling scenario completed was appropriate not to include the LTC in 2030 and remains so.

2.3 BRM Statement of Case

Highways and Access Arrangements

2.3.1 The Applicant has worked with the appointed consultant team to explore options which would facilitate the reprovision of both BRM's staff parking area and the Lorry Management Area (LMA) to ensure the on-going operations at the BRM site. The proposals identified are a like for like replacement facility for BRM in terms of quantum of staff car parking and size of the LMA in addition to being equally, if not more so, convenient for BRM's use given the proximity of the relocated facilities to the BRM site access/ egress.

2.3.2 It is common practice for venues such as the one included within the Proposed Development to operate with a capacity above the seated stadium capacity (8,000 in this Proposed Development) by utilising standing areas on the pitch, for a limited number of events throughout a calendar year under the control of an Event Management Plan.

2.3.3 Mitigation measures to ensure these events are appropriately managed with regard to highway, public transport and visitor safety are a necessity and would be included within the evidence and assessments described and required by any Event Management Plan secured.

2.3.4 A Parking Management Plan will be secured through an appropriate planning condition, specifically to mitigate any impacts arising from the Proposed Development on the highway and public transport networks in line with Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy.

2.3.5 The Proposed Development has been designed with wider carriageways than are currently in place serving both the BRM and Seacon sites. A review of Ordnance Survey mapping indicated that Lower Road currently has pinch points with carriageway widths below 6m. The proposed highway infrastructure replacing Lower Road has a minimum width of 6.5m with a minimum pinch point of approximately 7.15m at its narrowest point. This indicates that movement of any larger loads will be easier along the new route.

2.3.6 The Proposed Development includes for a network of pedestrian and cycle routes inclusive of both signalised and informal crossing points across the site. Details of these are provided within the following submitted documents and plans to demonstrate there would be no undue conflict between HGVs and pedestrians or cyclists as a result of the Proposed Development.